

ONE THE SPACE IN-BETWEEN

The Reverend Peter F. Walsh
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Sir Isaac Newton and his world

Most of us grew up in Sir Isaac Newton's world, even though he died in 1727. A Wikipedia page on the 10 most influential people of all time ranked him number two, behind Mohamed and ahead of Jesus.

Remember, this is the guy who legend has it got hit on the head with an apple. He was a physicist, astronomer, natural philosopher, alchemist, and theologian. His view of the physical world and how it works has dominated for nearly 300 years.

He helped to create the way we think, a way of reasoning that was hard wired into our brains though our expensive educations. He was the father of high school physics. He saw creation as a machine of sorts governed by natural laws. He advanced the scientific method. He developed the theory of gravity based on the centrifugal force of the earth.

Einstein and his world

One day when I was a Chaplain at the Kent School I was I was running some theory by a physics teacher and I said something about gravity.

He looked at me and laughed. He said, "Gravity? No one believes in gravity anymore." Then he broke into laughter. I had no idea how to respond. He then said something about quantum physics, and Einstein and theory of relativity. I think he was trying to describe field theory to me, about how gravity is not a force, but a field,

or a medium, a structures space. (*Leadership and the New Science*)

Though he was only three feet in front of me, I gave him that 1,000 mile stare, that deer in the headlights look. I did not say a thing. He walked away chuckling, shaking his head. I just stood there stuck in 1723. My expensive education had not prepared me to think in the 20th century, never mind the 21st century. While I was asleep at the proverbial gravity switch, the rules of the science game changed. A new science arose with a new set of rules. It was no longer just about things that could be seen, but now it was about things that could not be seen.

From Thing to Space

In Newton's world, it was all about the object, the thing, the apple.

If "1 + 1 = 2", in Newton's world it was about the '1' and the '2'.

In the quantum world, we studied the space between the '1 and 1 and the 2'. In this metaphor, in the quantum world it is about the '+' and '='. What the new science discovered was that the big story is not the '1' and the '2', it is the space in-between

Atomic Insight

This insight happened almost by accident, kind of like the story of the apple dropping on Newton's head. Scientists began to look at atoms, the basic building blocks of all material things. Ironically, what they discovered was not material things but space. Atoms are 99.999% space. Infinitesimal particles held together in a field. (*Leadership and the New Science*) It

is not about the particle (the electron or neutron or photon.) It is about the force field that we cannot see.

Space is not Empty: Field Theory

In Newton's world, the space in-between objects is empty.

In the quantum world the space in-between objects is alive, bustling and busy. Early quantum physicists called it "a cornucopia of invisible, but powerfully effective structure." (*Leadership and the New Science*) They called these invisible structures in space "fields." Fields are real but un-seeable. They exert influence and when they collide they can bring energy into matter (form). This is the famous $E=MC^2$ (squared) that made Einstein the most brilliant man of the 20th century. (By the way, Einstein came in number ten on the Wikipedia list.)

Our Space Today

So what does all of this science stuff have to do with us this morning?

First of all, let's begin by thinking about the space in-between us. Look at it. Is it bustling with activity? What sort of invisible fields do you think are there? We have a fighting chance at imagining this since we are religious people who believe there are real things that we do not see. Most religious experience is about sensing and knowing and being known by a Being that we do not see.

United by Space

If quantum theorists and religious people are correct, the space between me and you and you and your neighbor is not what separates us, but what unites us! Separation is a Newtonian concept. Unification is a quantum religious concept. That space

around each of us is chock full of all sorts of fields. What kind? Let's name a few.

Our Own Energetic Field

Every atomic particle has a field and certainly we can all agree that we have each brought our own energetic field here. If you ever doubted you had such a thing you know it when someone stands too close to you and invades your space. They are in your energy field.

Our energy creates an aura, which some people have the gift of seeing. Energies vibrate in such a way as to manifest themselves as different colors. I once knew a man in Cleveland who saw people as living stained glass windows. So we may not be physically touching but our energy is touching each other. Taken together we have created a big energy field here this morning that goes beyond this room and building.

The Field of the Communion of Saints

Certainly the force field of our predecessors is here. It is still creative and formative. St. Mark's has been meeting almost every Sunday for over 246 years. Our predecessors in the communion of saints gave us this church on this land. So when we make the decision to go to church we have got a place to be church. Perhaps some member of that field, that communion of saints is here in the power of the Spirit? I knew an old monk in Arizona who told me he saw the spirit of a former priest standing at the altar on the day of that parish's 50th anniversary.

The Divine Force Field in the Church

Certainly the force field of God is here today. I do not mean this in a general sense, like there is water in the ocean, though that is also true.

God's force field is invisible as our final hymn attests, "immortal, invisible God only wise." But because the force field is invisible does not mean it is not real. When we walk through an electromagnetic force field we sometimes get shocked. This space is charged with the Divine and when we are here we sometimes get shocked with God's grace. This happens in holy hot spots places and spaces that are soaked with prayer.

The Holy Spirit in Us

We also brought the force field of God in Christ with us today. We are the Church; you and me – the people. It is in us, through Baptism and the coming of the Holy Spirit. The Pentecost event is still going on.

Acts 1:8 – "you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth."

We bring the force field of Jesus all over the world, but today we brought the church to the Church.

Jesus

Moreover Jesus is here today. Jesus real and alive. This is the primary message of the Easter event, though sometimes we lose the palpable truth of this. He has told us when two or three are gathered in his name

He is in the midst of us. Today we are two or three hundred in his name. He is certainly here. Perhaps you might see with your mind's eye that he is sitting next to you. You may remember my Easter sermon about a woman who experiences this.

Jesus Brought You Here

It is very possible that the whole reason you are here today is that Jesus brought here to

be in this force field of love. That is the point of today's Gospel, with the parables of the lost sheep and the lost coin. He went out and found you and brought you here because you need it and we need you. Jesus is the hound of heaven who tracks us down and brings us to our holy home. Chaos theory has something known as the "odd attractor" and certainly Jesus is that for all of us, bringing us together and creating a kingdom of love out of chaos.

Relational Determination

One of the insights of quantum physics is that the type of church we become, that which we co-create with God, is not pre-determined. It all depends on how we relate with one another. It is relational. What we are to become is up to us. Each of us has the power to help create it. You make it as holy and good and powerful as you wish. It all depends on how we relate with one another and with our God. It is the relationship that is the creative force, the determining thing. Back to our metaphor about $1 + 1 = 2$.

The nature of the "plus" determines what we will "equal." Let me give you some examples of the power you have.

Becky Bailey: Charged with the energy of our intentions

We charge our church, the energy field that we call St. Mark's with love or hatred. Let me tell you a shocking story.

Several years ago a great friend of our family went to a parenting conference run by a woman named Becky Bailey. Becky was prompting positive parenting. She was trying to highlight that our energetic behavior affects our children. She was pointing out that we have the ability to convey energy without words. Certainly most of us are aware of this at an unconscious level when someone comes in the room who is out of sorts and it changes

the whole dynamic in the room, even though no one has said a word.

There were about 500 people at this conference. To demonstrate this, Becky brought someone up on stage. She had two hangers suspended from the bottom of a cardboard box. When Becky came in touch with this person's energy field, her aura, the two hangers would touch. This happened about two feet from the person. She then had the crowd send this person love and good vibrations. If you could not do it you were to turn around.

When people did this Becky began to move back step by step and the two hangers continued to touch until she had stepped back 29 feet. This woman's energy field increased from 2 feet to nearly 30 feet. Then Becky had the crowd reverse this process and send this person ill will. Becky was able to go all the way to touching the person without the hangers ever touching each other. In other words, the crowd sucked all of the energy out of this woman. This is what was portrayed by the demontors in Harry Potter.

Each of you has the power to energize this church as a place of love.

Prayer: Maranatha

We also have the power to energize our field with the spirit of Christ. We have the power of prayer. Prayer is communication and relationship with God. It is real and it works.

When we pray "maranatha," "Come, Lord Jesus", the Lord who said "Ask and seek and knock" comes. Our communal prayer of 'maranatha' during the house churches changed this community.

Intercessory Prayer

Finally, a note about intercessory prayer and our need to pray for one another and the world. The story comes from a new age guru who is not a Christian. She was at a conference teaching and a woman who was not attending the conference told her this story.

She said she had been in a terrible auto accident. She experienced her soul leaving her body and floating above her mangled car and body. She could discern people's thoughts by putting her attention on the cars. In the first four cars behind her people were worried about being late. The roof of the fifth car was glowing. She put her attention on the car and heard a woman praying for her. She saw a light shoot out the top of the car and go heavenward and then come down her spine. The woman, who was hovering her body, memorized the license plate. She then returned to her body where she was in a coma for two months. When she came out of the coma she asked a friend who was a policeman to look up the license plate number. When she was out of rehab she bought a dozen roses and went to the person who had prayed for her. She rang the doorbell and told her the story handed her the roses and said thank you.

Conclusion

Folks, there is a lot of unseen stuff in the church that is real. The more aware of it we are the better. So in the coming year let's use our energy and our intention and our prayer to become a force field of love supercharged with the Spirit of Christ.

Let's use the unseen stuff to become a church bursting with disciples who make Christ real for the world to see.

Amen.